Play Space Action Plan

Community Engagement Summary 2025

BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

Project and Objectives

Byron Shire has 37 playgrounds. Most are small and mainly for younger children.

A Playspace Action Plan was developed to address community feedback over a number of years that asked for playspaces that are more fun, inclusive, bigger and diverse.

To make sure the plan and suggested upgrades match the community expectations Council asked for feedback during November and December 2025. The feedback was framed around the following:

- gauge the responses on how the community uses playspaces
- gauge community sentiment regarding the proposed removal of some playspaces
- gauge community sentiment regarding the proposal to recommend increasing the size and distribution of playspaces, as an offset to the operational cost saved by removing some playspaces
- gauge community sentiment on the proposal to have a larger walkability to playspaces of 400m to 800m.

Where, When and How

A range of communication and engagement activities were undertaken to inform, consult, and involve participants across the community about the plan.

The community engagement focused on several key engagements:

- Your Say online survey
- Newspaper advertising and media release
- Onsite engagement at farmers markets
    - Byron Farmers Markets
    - Bangalow Famers Markets
- Onsite workshop with Bangalow Public School Student Representative Council
- Onsite data collection for playspaces earmarked for removal to record usage
- Email out to all schools in the Byron Shire

The engagement summary table below provides a review on the key topics that were raised during consultation and Council's action to address these moving forward.

Engagement Summary Table

Topic	What We Heard	Response
Expansion of facilities	There was a mixed response regarding larger facilities at the expense of smaller facility loss. There were some areas including Main Beach Byron that were consistently called for a replacement of the previous playspace. Consultation with primary children indicated a need for larger facilities, however, acknowledging the convenience of the smaller facilities in younger age groups. Those opposed to the removal of smaller play areas tended to be living close by.	The plan will be revised to reduce the size of some of the proposed larger facilities and in turn reduce the number of playspaces earmarked for removal. The plan will reduce the size of some of the proposed larger facilities in Mullumbimby and Bangalow. The Byron foreshore playspaces of Apex Park and Dening park will form a precinct of play and become a district park (previously two separate Nneighbourhood parks) Pepperbush St and Bunya Crt, see comments in individual facilities, will be removed. Further consultation being conducted for other facilities as they reach end of life.
Removal of playspaces	There were a mix of responses regarding the removal or reduction of size of playspaces. Those that strongly opposed the reduction or removal of playspaces tended to live adjacent to the facility.	Further consultation required on key parks as the asset nears end of life for key playspaces. See below for comments on individual facilities.
Leopardwood Crt and Parrot Tree Pl parks	Several submissions and opposition to the removal of Leopardwood Crt. Reasoning including shade and location to residents. Parrot tree cited as having less equipment and not as much natural shade.	Further consultation required with community as the Leopardwood playspace further ages and requires replacement. Leopardwood is 100m from Parrot Tree Place. Parrot Tree was funded by developer contributions and has equipment, shelters, bbq and space for expansion.
Pepperbush St Park (Suffolk Park)	Several comments from families near the park requesting no removal citing shade and quiet park away from main park in Linda Vidler.	Pepperbush Park is 100m from a large playspace at Linda Vidler. There is a proposed future small nature play playspace earmarked at Linda Vidler which would replace Pepperbush. Removal is still proposed as the asset reaches end of life.
Bunya Place Park (Suffolk Park)	Some comments regarding retention of Bunya, including from the nearby Child care. A submission also suggests this area could be a dog off lead if playspace	Further consultation required with residents as playspace reaches end of life, including analysis of the site for dog off lead area.

	removed. There is currently no dog off lead area in Suffolk.	
Gordon and Evans St Parks (Byron Bay)	Two comments regarding Gordon St being used by locals. Railway park is deemed unsafe. No comments regarding Evans St.	Retain in current format given safety concerns at Railway Park (Gordon St) and distance to other facilities (Evans St)
Jacaranda Drive Park (Sunrise)	Several comments expressing how well used the park is by residents, including birthday parties. Comments focused on a toilet and upgrades to the park.	Jacaranda park is a suburban park that has been added on to over time. A new neighbourhood size park is expected to be delivered at Harvest estate which will compliment Jacaranda.
Sunrise Blvd Park	Several comments opposing the reduction in scale of this facility. Park is well shaded and is used for social gatherings in the neighbourhood.	Change recommendation from reduce to retain in current format.
Mackellar Crt (Byron Bay)	Several comments relating to Mackellar Crt and requirement for future upgrades. A passionate community that cherishes the park.	A well-situated park. Suggest working with the community as the park ages to develop a plan for a well-functioning local park and community space.
Torakina/Excelsior Crt Park (Brunswick Heads)	A submission and comments regarding the timing of upgrades on this facility. Council has previously received requests for upgrades in line with new developments coming online at Bayside.	A well-situated park. Suggest working with the community as the park ages to develop a plan for a well-functioning local park and community space. Timing determined by future adjacent development.
Shade	Request for shade at existing and new playgrounds was a consistent theme.	Playspaces will include natural shade (tree plantings), if not existing, and explore shade structures where funding is available.
Fencing	Requests for fencing of playspaces next to busy roads	Playspaces will include fencing when an upgrade is near a busy road.
Timing of the action plan	Some frustration with the timing of upgrades, including Torakina/Excelsior and Piccabeen.	Timeline upgrades are indicative and reliant on funding, grant applications and deterioration of facilities.

Engagement Summary

The data from the Your Say survey, stakeholder submissions and onsite community engagements provide comprehensive feedback and direction on the draft plan, however with mixed views.

The Your Say summary indicates conflicted views on the key proposal of the action plan to develop larger facilities by reducing the oversupply of small local playspaces, as per below:

> 53 of 101 responses show a positive sentiment towards the plan with 57 of 101 agree to larger play by removing small play in locations. When specifically asked about the removal of play, the agreement reduces to 43 of 101 responses with slightly more neutral responses. Comments from the survey reflect the desire for larger and more diverse playspaces however this appears to be not at the expense of any removal of smaller facilities.

The profile of respondents for the Your Say were majority parents or grandparents. Interestingly when young people from Bangalow were consulted their preference appeared to be for one large playspace rather than lots of small ones.

In terms of the playspaces requirements responses indicated a need for shade, fencing, differing types of equipment/experiences and safety.

Response indicated a high community value attached to play at Brunswick Heads adjacent to the river, and lack of clarity from the community that these assets are not Councils' responsibility.

Responses and comments, including community submissions, indicated community value/pride in several key playspaces and areas including:

- Apex Park Byron Bay (foreshore)
- Jacaranda Drive Park and Sunrise Park
- Leopardwood Crescent Park
- Toorkina and Excelsior St Park
- Mackellar Crt Park

For those opposed to the removal of play spaces the key learnings were:
Leopardwood Cres is a shady place used by local families. Parrot Tree Cres is underused, has limited shade. The parks are very close together and more community engagement is required to understand community desire for future upgrades at Parrot Tree Park and reduction of Leopardwood Cres.

Sunrise Park is well loved by the community and liked because of its shady atmosphere.

Pepperbush Park is used by residents. Argument in response relating to distance to other parks is not correct being only 100m from Linda Vidler.

The following is a summary of the main themes from the survey and comments.

- **Shade and Shelter**
    - Shade is consistently ranked as a top priority due to high sun exposure and skin cancer concerns in the region.
- **Facilities and Amenities**
    - Toilets, seating, BBQ areas, and drinking water are frequently requested.
    - Fenced playgrounds are highly desired for safety, especially near roads.
- **Play Equipment Diversity**
    - Calls for more challenging equipment for older children and teenagers.
    - Suggestions for nature-based play, climbing structures, flying foxes, and multiple swings.
    - Interest in creative designs (e.g. wooden play, water play areas).
- **Desire to Retain Small Local Parks**
    - Comments within the survey reflected a desire from respondents to retain smaller playgrounds, citing their importance for walkability, community connection, and accessibility for families with young children.
    - Concerns that removing local parks forces families to drive, reducing exercise and convenience.
- **Upgrade Rather Than Remove**
    - Support for upgrading existing parks instead of removing them.
- **Accessibility and Proximity**
    - Distance to home is critical; smaller parks are valued for easy access.
    - Larger destination parks are welcomed but not at the expense of local spaces.
- **Community and Social Value**
    - Parks seen as vital for fostering community, reducing screen time, and promoting healthy habits.
    - Concerns that removing parks undermines social cohesion and child development.
- **Maintenance and Safety**
    - Comments about poor condition of some parks (e.g., Linda Vidler, Apex Park).
    - Requests for better upkeep, shade sails, and safe pathways for walking and cycling.
- **Equity Across the Shire**
    - Strong sentiment that northern areas (Brunswick Heads, Ocean Shores, Mullumbimby) are neglected compared to Byron Bay and Suffolk Park.
    - Calls for fair distribution of upgrades.

Next Steps and Recommendations

A review of the feedback, as outlined in the summary above, indicates some minor adjustments to the play space action plan are required and further consultation with key communities required, when the playspaces require replacement.

Key amendments include:

Key Point

Reduce the scale of upgrades to playspaces to accommodate retention of smaller playspaces that were earmarked for removal.

Proposed amendments to the plan

- Byron Foreshore and Dening Park to become a District Park as part of a combined precinct of play – currently earmarked as two Neighbourhood size parks.
- Reduction of size in proposed upgrade at Apex Park, Mullumbimby from District to Neighbourhood.
- Reduction of size in proposed upgrade at Railway Park Byron from Neighbourhood to retain in current form.
- Add Mackellar Crt Park as a renewal to local park in the action plan.

Playspaces earmarked for removal

- Remove pepperbush park at end of life, due to distance to nearby Linda Vidler.
- Remove Bunya Crt, with potential for dog off lead area. Offset shade required at Linda Vidler to compensate for removal of shaded playspace.
- More consultation on Leopardwood and Parrot Tree with the community as facility reaches end of life.
- Retain Gordon St Park
- Retain Evans St Park

Considerations for future upgrades

- Prioritise shade structures and tree planting at high-use sites (Heritage Park and Jacaranda Park).
- Add toilets/amenities where repeatedly requested (Jacaranda and Heritage Park).
- Provide additional fenced playgrounds near busy roads (Dening Park)
- Increase swings and slides; include flying fox/zipline where feasible.

Brunswick Playgrounds near the River

Council to forward the outcomes of the consultation to Reflections for consideration in the development of future playgrounds along the river.

Engagement Review

A review of the engagement types that were undertaken and summary of the data received from the survey.

Your Say Survey

The survey engagement period ran between 4 Nov 2025 - 5 Dec 2025.
The Your Say page had 615 views, 514 visits, 101 contributions.
The survey was promoted via coreflute boards at all the parks and advertising in The Echo (5 and 19/11/25) and Byron Coast Times (14/11/25).

An email was sent to all schools in the Shire promoting the survey and included an invitation for a workshop session with students.

The survey asked several key questions regarding the objectives of the plan. Some of the key findings from the survey are provided in participation overview section, below.

Farmers Markets

Pop up sites were set up at Bangalow (15 November) and Byron Farmers Markets (13 November).

School Engagement

On 26 November 2025, Jim Roberts and Anna Vinfield met with the Student Representative Council at Bangalow Public School.
The students had great feedback on the plan, particularly regarding playspaces in Bangalow and the rest of Byron Shire, how they use them, travel to and from and their favorite equipment. Bangalow year 6 students also interviewed the kindergarten children on their thoughts regarding the key issues

The following key points were raised by Bangalow SRC

- Prefer one big epic playground, rather than lots of little ones

- Like the spinning equipment at Piccabeen
- Go to Piccabeen park for weir/creek, playground is secondary
- Love pop Denison Park (spinning, big flying fox, spider web) in Ballina, Hamster Wheel in Southbank (Brisbane), New Farm Park treehouse/boardwalk (Brisbane)
- Use parks playgrounds for birthday parties or go with younger siblings
- Park at Bangalow sports fields is a multi-use with fields, walking track, skatepark – connection point and easy to access and used well by families. Is a hub.
- Usually drive to park, to ride or sometimes walk
- Spend 30mins at parks if with younger siblings/friends, shorter time with friends
- Want something “more” at Piccabeen nature playground
- Want rock climbing, big boulders, nets
- Spaces where you can relax as well (e.g. Rocks River Park in Brisbane)
- Need different things for different ages
- Some parks have lots of memories and wouldn’t want to take away (Leopardwood)
- Maybe too crowded if get rid of all the little parks, so need to keep a mixture

Key Stakeholder Submissions

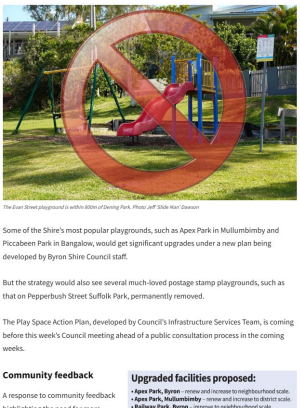
Several submissions were received from interested stakeholder as per below, see also Attachment 4.

- **Sanda Helpern –** comments in relation to Leopardwood Close
- **Bayside Residents Association –** regarding the timing of upgrades to Toorkina Rd and Excelsior park
- **Lilly Pilly Preschool -** regarding the timing of upgrades to Toorkina Rd and Excelsior park
- **Ian Holmes (Bangalow Place Planning Collective) –** questions regarding timing of upgrades to Piccabeen park.
- **Eliza Green –** regarding upgrades required to Mackellar Crt play space.

Media

The echo ran a story on the back of the media release being sent out, on Sept 11 2025.

Shire-wide playground overhaul planned – The Echo



The Evan Street playground is within 800m of Dening Park. Photo: Jeff 'Slide Man' Dawson

Some of the Shire's most popular playgrounds, such as Apex Park in Mullumbimby and Piccabeen Park in Bangalow, would get significant upgrades under a new plan being developed by Byron Shire Council staff.

But the strategy would also see several much-loved postage stamp playgrounds, such as that on Pepperbush Street Suffolk Park, permanently removed.

The Play Space Action Plan, developed by Council's Infrastructure Services Team, is coming before this week's Council meeting ahead of a public consultation process in the coming weeks.

Community feedback

A response to community feedback

Upgraded facilities proposed:

- **Apex Park, Byron** - renew and increase to neighbourhood scale.
- **Apex Park, Mullumbimby** - renew and increase to district scale.

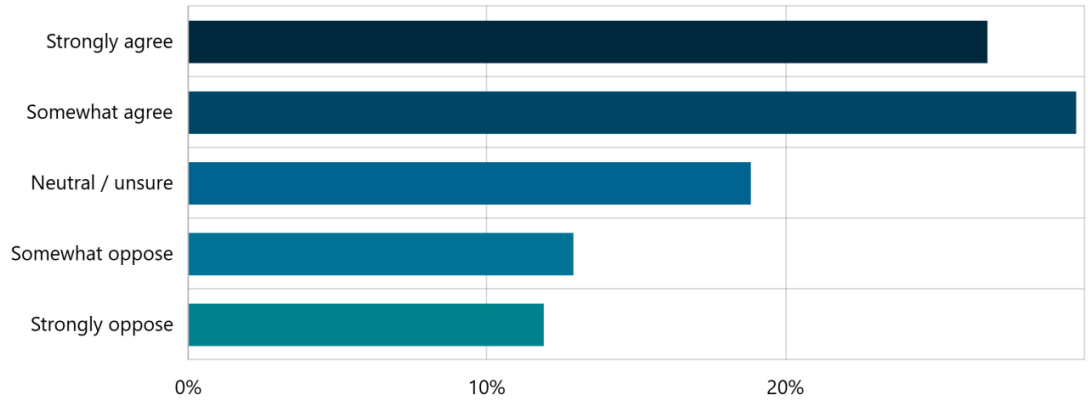
Your Say Survey

Review and summary of survey data and responses

Question 1

The draft Playspace Action Plan looks at all playspaces across the Shire and considers the location, quality and diversity of these spaces. The Plan suggests improving some playspaces by making them bigger, more inclusive and fun for all ages. To do this, it considers removing some smaller or less used playspaces when they reach the end of their life. The funds could then be redirected to creating larger, better-equipped spaces that more people can access.

1. How much do you agree with this approach? Required
Multi Choice | Skipped: 3 | Answered: 101 (97.1%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Strongly agree	26.73%	27
Somewhat agree	29.70%	30
Neutral / unsure	18.81%	19
Somewhat oppose	12.87%	13
Strongly oppose	11.88%	12
Total	**100.00%**	**101**

Summary

From the findings above 57 of 101 responses agreed with the approach to reduce smaller playgrounds when they reach end of life and create larger playgrounds, still within access of the community. This does not include neutral/unsure responses.

Question 2

Please provide reason for your answer above (Q1)
The main respondents to this answer were those opposed to the removal of playspaces in their area. These responses can be found in Attachment 1 - Overview Report from Online Your Say Survey. A summary of findings can be found in Engagement Summary section.

Question 3.

The Plan proposes removing the following playspaces at the end of their life. • Bunya Court, Suffolk Park • Evans Court, Byron Bay • Gordon Street, Byron Bay • Leopard Wood Crescent, Bangalow • Pepperbush Court, Suffolk Park. The land will be retained as open space. Funds will then be redirected into improving other playspaces in the area.

The survey indicated

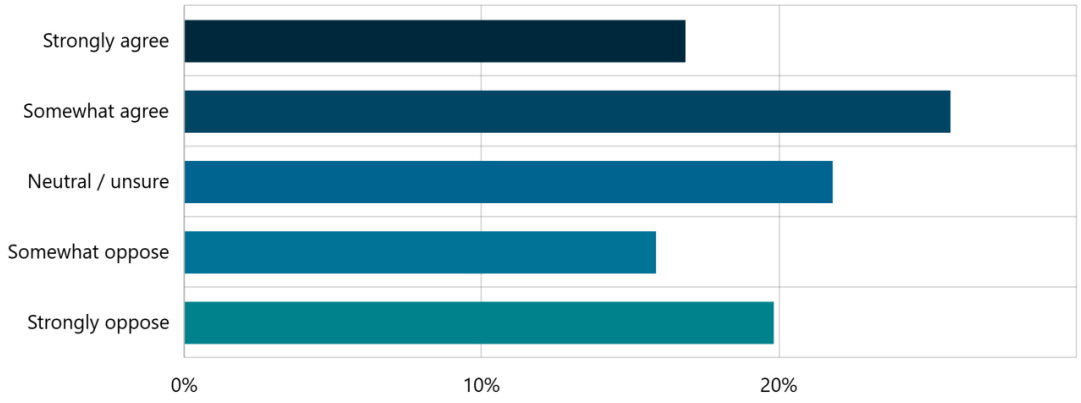
43 of 101 (42%) responses agreed or somewhat agreed with the approach.

22 of 101 (23 %) responses were neutral

36 0f 101 (35 %) responses were opposed or somewhat opposed to the approach

Of those opposed there were several comments made in Q4 below relating to specific playspaces adjacent to residents including Leopardwood Cres and Pepperbush St Park.

3. How much do you agree with this approach?
Multi Choice | Skipped: 3 | Answered: 101 (97.1%)



Answer choices	Percent	Count
Strongly agree	16.83%	17
Somewhat agree	25.74%	26
Neutral / unsure	21.78%	22
Somewhat oppose	15.84%	16
Strongly oppose	19.80%	20
Total	**100.00%**	**101**

Question 4

How much do you agree with this approach? (removal of playspaces) – please provide reasons for your answer.

Several comments were received, majority by those that opposed the removal of the playspaces that were adjacent to their properties or who disagreed with the extra distance travel to larger parks.

Summary of comments can be found below in Engagement Summary section. Responses can be found in Attachment 1 - Overview Report from Online Your Say Survey.

Summary of Questions 1 - 4

Recurring themes in comments were:

• Shade is critical for UV protection
• Desire for water play and beachside waterparks
• Calls to reinstate Main Beach/Apex Park playground
• Growth areas (Sunrise, Ewingsdale) need major upgrades
• Teen/older kids need challenging features
• Concerns about removing small locals before replacements
• Requests for fences, swings, flying fox, inclusive design

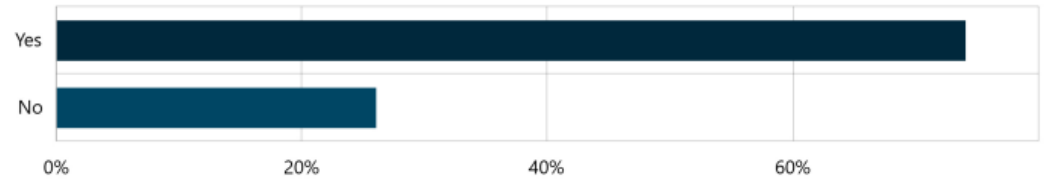
Some key comments regarding locations

- Main Beach Playground needs to be replaced
- Removal of Bunya Crt for possible dog off lead
- Removal of Mango Bark Crt proposed
- Tom Kendall needs expanding
- Ewingsdale not considered within the plan
- Leopardwood Crescent park valued for walking distance to homes
- Parrot Tree Place Park not seen as genuine alternative to Leopardwood Cres Park
- Gordon St located in area with short term rentals and young families
- Sunrise play is valued due to walking distance from Jacaranda too far.

Question 5

Have you read the Playspace Action Plan
74% of respondents had read the plan.

5. Have you read the Playspace Action Plan?
Multi Choice | Skipped: 4 | Answered: 100 (96.2%)

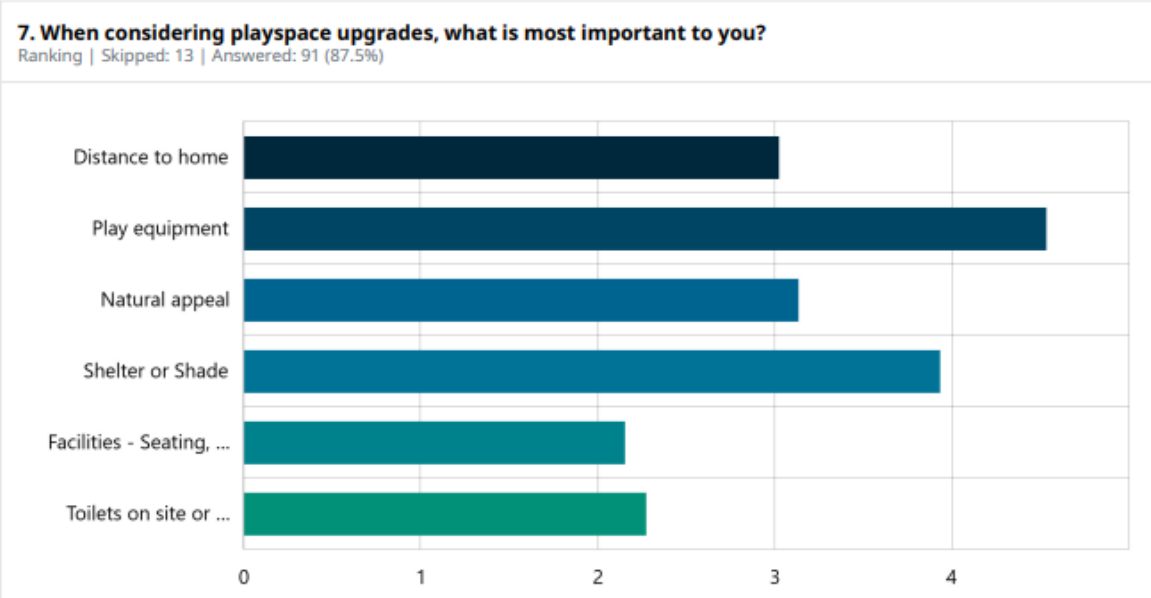


Answer choices	Percent	Count
Yes	74.00%	74
No	26.00%	26
Total	**100.00%**	**100**

Q6 *Do you have any comments about the Playspace Action Plan*

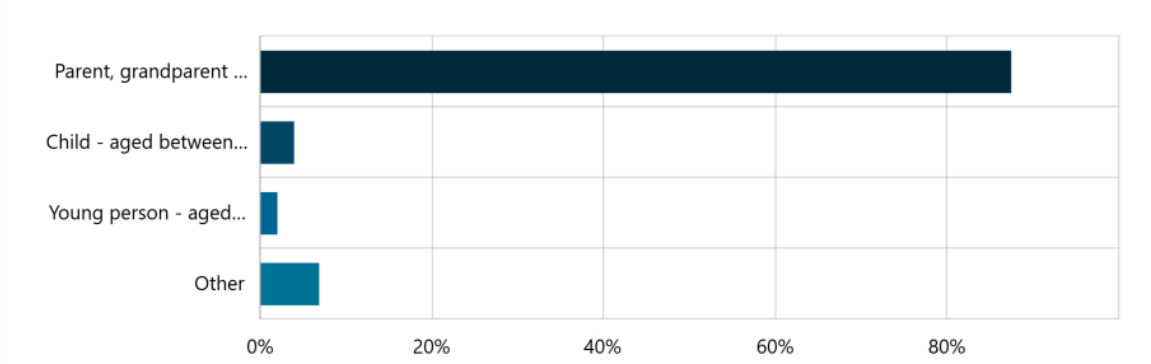
Feedback summarised in the Engagement Summary section below and collated into actions in the Engagement Summary Table.

Q7. *When considering playspace upgrades, what is most important to you?*



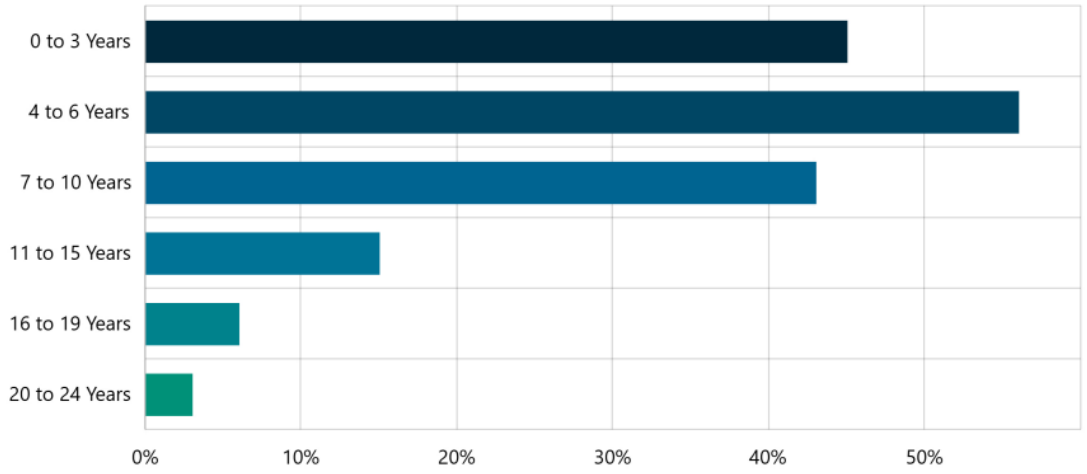
Q9 *Are you a …?*

87% of respondents were a parent or grandparent.



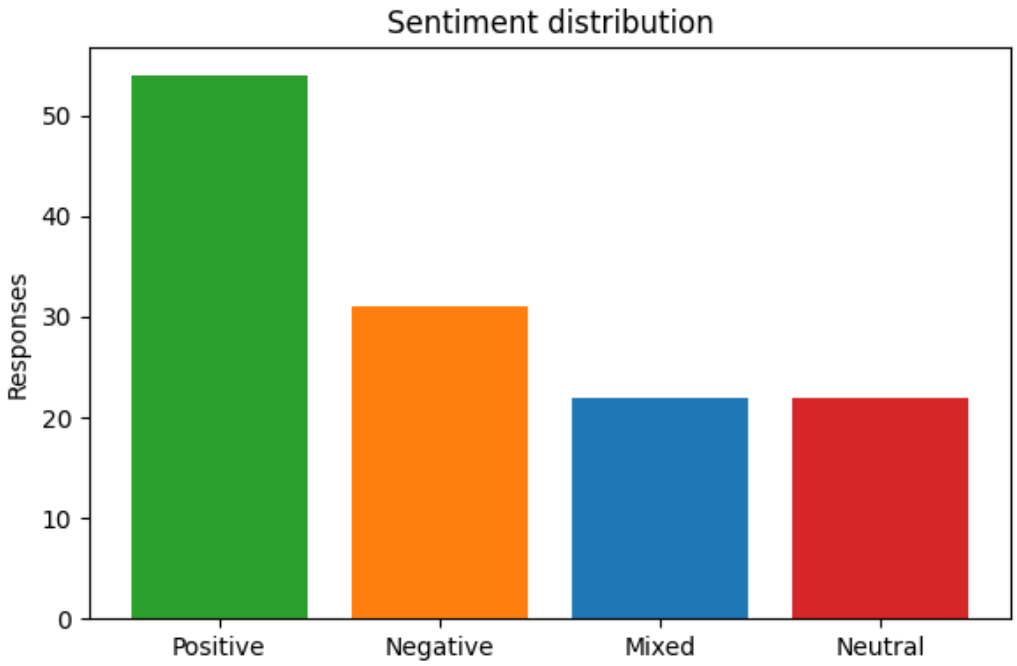
Answer choices	Percent	Count
Parent, grandparent or carer	87.38%	90
Child - aged between 0 and 12 years old	3.88%	4
Young person - aged between 12 to 24 years old	1.94%	2
Other	6.80%	7
Total	**100.00%**	**103**

Question 10 - *What is the age range of the children or young people that you most often go to a playspace with? Or if you are the child or young person, what is your age?*

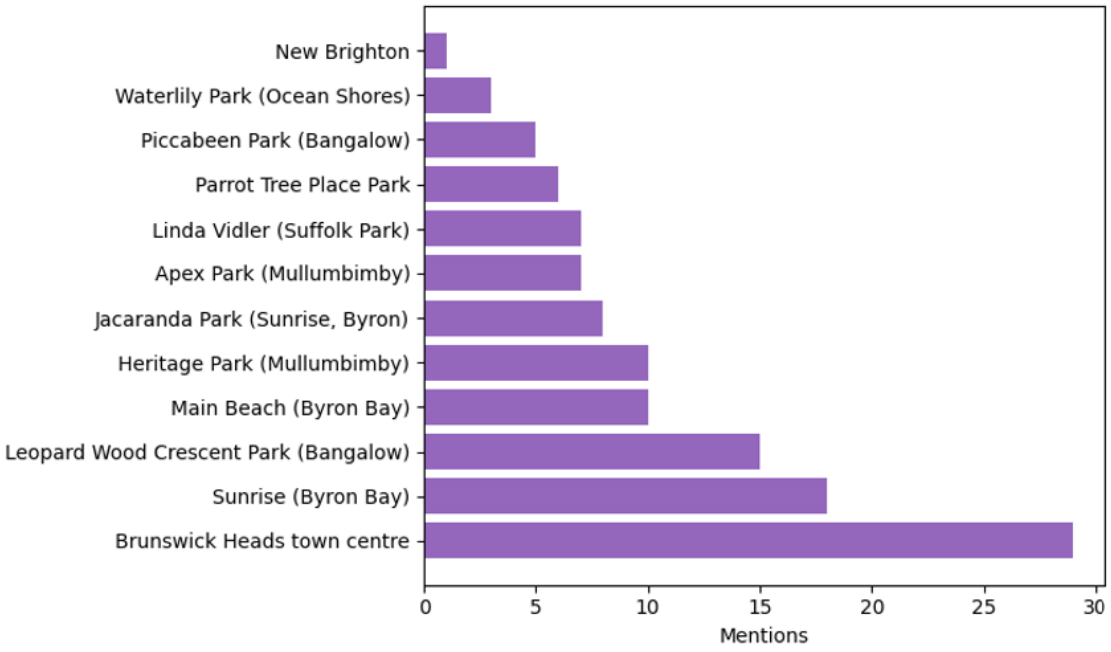


Answer choices	Percent	Count
0 to 3 Years	45.00%	45
4 to 6 Years	56.00%	56
7 to 10 Years	43.00%	43
11 to 15 Years	15.00%	15
16 to 19 Years	6.00%	6
20 to 24 Years	3.00%	3

General Sentiment from the Survey



Locations most mentioned in comments



Attachments

1 - Overview Report from Online Your Say Survey (E2026/273)

2 – Site Visits to Playspaces for Action Plan (E2025/143330)

3 - Key stakeholder submissions – combined (E2025/143321)

4. Play space action play Your Say Survey – Hard Copy (E2025/143326)